

Statistics Surrounding Child Sexual Abuse [From the Darkness to Light Organization](#)

The statistics are shocking

- 1 in 4 girls is sexually abused before the age of 18. (96)
- 1 in 6 boys is sexually abused before the age of 18. (96)
- 1 in 5 children are solicited sexually while on the internet. (30, 87)
- Nearly 70% of all reported sexual assaults (including assaults on adults) occur to children ages 17 and under. (76)
- An estimated 39 million survivors of childhood sexual abuse exist in America today. (1)

Even within the walls of their own homes, children are at risk for sexual abuse

- 30-40% of victims are abused by a family member. (2, 44, 76)
- Another 50% are abused by someone outside of the family whom they know and trust.
- Approximately 40% are abused by older or larger children whom they know. (1, 44)
- Therefore, only 10% are abused by strangers.

Sexual abuse can occur at all ages, probably younger than you think

- The median age for reported abuse is 9 years old. (64)
- More than 20% of children are sexually abused before the age of 8. (76)
- Nearly 50% of all victims of forcible sodomy, sexual assault with an object, and forcible fondling are children under 12. (74, 76)

Most children don't tell even if they have been asked

- Evidence that a child has been sexually abused is not always obvious, and many children do not report that they have been abused.
- Over 30% of victims never disclose the experience to ANYONE.
- Young victims may not recognize their victimization as sexual abuse.
- Almost 80% initially deny abuse or are tentative in disclosing. Of those who do disclose, approximately 75% disclose accidentally. Additionally, of those who do disclose, more than 20% eventually recant even though the abuse occurred.
- Fabricated sexual abuse reports constitute only 1% to 4% of all reported cases. Of these reports, 75% are falsely reported by adults and 25% are reported by children. Children only fabricate ½% of the time.

Consequences of child sexual abuse begin affecting children and families immediately. They also affect society in innumerable and negative ways. These effects can continue throughout the life of the survivor so the impact on society for just one survivor continues over multiple decades. Try to imagine the impact of 39 million survivors.

Health and/or Behavioral Problems:

- The way a victim's family responds to abuse plays an important role in how the incident affects the victim.
- Sexually abused children who keep it a secret or who "tell" and are not believed are at greater risk than the general population for psychological, emotional, social, and physical problems often lasting into adulthood.
- Children who have been victims of sexual abuse are more likely to experience physical health problems (e.g., headaches).
- Victims of child sexual abuse report more symptoms of PTSD, more sadness, and more school problems than non-victims. (10, 16, 55, 72)
- Victims of child sexual abuse are more likely to experience major depressive disorder as adults. (55, 72)
- Young girls who are sexually abused are more likely to develop eating disorders as adolescents. (16, 40, 89)
- Adolescent victims of violent crime have difficulty in the transition to adulthood, are more likely to suffer financial failure and physical injury, and are at risk to fail in other areas due to problem behaviors and outcomes of the victimization.

Drug and/or Alcohol Problems:

- Victims of child sexual abuse report more substance abuse problems. 70-80% of sexual abuse survivors report excessive drug and alcohol use. (10, 16, 89)
- Young girls who are sexually abused are 3 times more likely to develop psychiatric disorders or alcohol and drug abuse in adulthood, than girls who are not sexually abused. (16, 40, 89)
- Among male survivors, more than 70% seek psychological treatment for issues such as substance abuse, suicidal thoughts and attempted suicide. Males who have been sexually abused are more likely to violently victimize others. (90)

Most perpetrators don't molest only one child if they are not reported and stopped.

- Nearly 70% of child sex offenders have between 1 and 9 victims; at least 20% have 10 to 40 victims. (23)
- An average serial child molester may have as many as 400 victims in his lifetime.

More information about youth protection and abuse prevention is available from the [Online Resource Library](#).